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## PM: Dr M no longer wields the fear factor

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**PETALING JAYA:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's failure to unseat the Prime Minister is partly due to the fact that he no longer wields the "fear factor".

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the elderly leader's control of Umno was largely by virtue of being the then party president and Prime Minister.

"He ruled by fear. Once he was no longer president, there is no more fear of him nor the ability to control and he could not determine things in Umno. There was respect but no fear," said the Prime Minister.

He said Dr Mahathir operated through the mentris besar and chief ministers to control the divisions.

"Once the MBs were no longer there, he had no contact with the division heads. You'd be surprised he didn't know the names of many of them," he said.

Najib, on the other hand, is seen as one of them because he came up with them over some 30 to 40 years.

"I don't just rely on the MBs, I am part of them and that is why Mahathir cannot dislodge me from Umno. I was short of my 23rd birth-

day when I entered politics. It gave me a huge advantage because I grew up with over two generations of leaders in Umno," he said.

He shared a conversation he had with the late Lee Kuan Yew in 2009 who likened Dr Mahathir to a heavyweight boxer who keeps punching until he wears you out.

"He is obsessed about doing things his way, it's his way or the highway. I thought he would go against me, what I did not anticipate was the meanness of his reaction.

"I suppose that's part and parcel of what the man is about. Unless he achieves absolute control, he's not going to stop. Kuan Yew's analysis of him was spot on."

Najib said it was the "epitome of Machiavellian politics" and the "height of hypocrisy" that Dr Mahathir is sharing the stage with Lim Kit Siang and shaking hands with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"Do you think its for the love of Kit Siang, do you think Kit Siang loves Mahathir?"

Najib said he did not believe that the "strange bedfellows" will last for long.